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Eleventh United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names
New York, 8-17 August 2017
Item 8 of the provisional agenda*
Measures taken and proposed to implement United Nations resolutions on the standardization of geographical names, including the economic and social benefits

Report on the implementation of United Nations resolutions by New Zealand

Summary**

The report focuses on 29 resolutions of the United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names between 1967 and 2012. They have been chosen because of their relevance to the work of the national naming authority of New Zealand, the New Zealand Geographic Board Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa.

Geographic names play a significant role in the historical, cultural, economic, administrative and linguistic matters of New Zealand. The two fundamental roles of the Board under the New Zealand Geographic Board (Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa) Act 2008, are location identification and preservation of culture and heritage, which have both direct and indirect economic and social benefits for all New Zealanders.

The Government of New Zealand wants reliable names and locations of geographic features; therefore it recognizes geographic names as a fundamental theme of the spatial data infrastructure of the country. Unique and usable geographic names are key to locating people and property, contribute to efficient government administration and link data for a wide range of public and private purposes. Geographic names identify where we are as people go about their everyday business, are a component of infrastructure and, most importantly, matter in emergency responses. Geographic names also add to a sense of identity and belonging — helping to better connect people with their identity: who they are, where they are from and the importance of those who came before them. Many of the geographic names in New Zealand describe the physical aspects of features and provide information about the natural and cultural conditions at the time they were coined. The resources found in those places may be useful for survival or economic gain.

* E/CONF.105/1.

** The full report was prepared by Jill Remnant, Advisor, New Zealand Geographic Board Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa, and is available from http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEGN/ungegnConf11.html, in the language of submission only, as document E/CONF.105/36/CRP.36.

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Implementation of the relevant recommendations of the United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names has been ongoing throughout the long history of the Board, which began formally in 1946 as a successor to the Honorary Geographic Board of New Zealand, which was established in 1924. The naming role of the Board has been developed and refined over the years to reflect lessons learned, changing attitudes and to uphold best practice naming principles. The Board follows best practices that have been established as a result of the recommendations set out in the resolutions of the Conference and that are applicable to New Zealand. The Board's decision-making is independent and based on robust processes.